5/22/71

Dear Jim,

Enclosed are my today's letter to Jerry and a clipping from the SF Chron I strongly encourage you and Bud to regard with seriousness. If it is the kind of thing that could be thought up by a clever columnist, it is also exactly what I first thought when I heard of that zany caper. I am and was convinced Jimmie was set up for this. He will not learn. There was no cahnce of getting out of those mountains without help, and who would make such an attempt without knowing it would be waiting? The FBI may be a prospect, but I have others in mind as more likely. And they could have swung this easily. The appearance of my book and what I've gotten since makes this an inevitable effort on somebody's part.

Now, the first thing Jimmie did was feed me a tip that is ambiguous as I got it. He did this almost as soon as they put him away, and what he said had to come through censorship, as you know. Here again, while I hate the time it takes to write him, I think you can see a reason for forwarding my letters as soon as you get them. He can't make the kind of hints to lawyers he can to me. Even in areas where he could he seems not to have.

You may recall I told you I'd come to some conclusions too dangerous for you all to have. I have shared them with the most dependable people and I have been working on them. But I've selected for my duplication nobody connected with my JFK work, nobody who would be either suspected or sought out. Even prior to that I'd given Bud some hints I will not now repeat. If he remembers them, that is one thing, and he'd better not whisper about them. If he doesn't, that's better. But as strongly as I can I must impress upon you all the very considerable hazard I am certain is involved as long as Jimmie lives and thereafter to me. I do hope the jaws can stop flapping, especially to those whose can't, ever.

I saw no choice but to send a copy to Jerry and Stoner. I'd discussed similar things with Jerry from the first, in the hope that he might in some way press caution on Jimmie. This will not be new to him.

I've been thinking of what you said Jimmie said, and I still can't figure it. Is it something that was censored or did it do through unopened? If it is censored, I suggest that one of the possibilities is so that it would be read. But I am just guessing. The one thing of which I am certain is that it is entirely inconsistent with everything else he has done and said. Until that stupidity, he'd been writing me twice a week sometimes.

If the room in which I interviewed him was bugged, perhaps that can explain the shift in wardens, which can also be quite innocent. But the coincidence in timing is too great to overlook entirely.

If you want me to give you an appraisal of the importance I attribute to this, let me tell you that since returning to writing on other things, the latest I've been in bed is before 5 a.m. (quarter of today, the latest this week) and the earliest I've gone to bed is 11-and I began pooped. Early yesterday morning some kid wrecked his car at my old place, knocking a tree on an uninsured building. My mother had major and extensive surgery yesterday. And at 2 o'clock this a.m. my former home caught fire, doing, from what the cops told me by phone this a.m., about $10,000 damage.

Whatever, keep me posted. And if I ever hear of any of you even making a hint of this to anybody, I promise two things: you'll never forget it and you'll never see me again. We are past the point where the dilletante/storybook attitude can be tolerated, or survived. There are now too many with vested interests, any one of whom can make it look like others if anything happens, and there is now too much danger to too many powerful and capable people.

Sincerely,